



# Wollongong College Australia

*A College of the University of Wollongong*

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## **STEP to UOW**

**Subject Outline**  
**Summer 2009/10**

**STEP111 Session 1**  
**STEP211 Session 2**  
**Academic Literacy**

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WCA-STEP11/STEP211-S0/6

# Academic Literacy

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## Subject description

Academic Literacy is a skills-based subject designed to help students acquire the essential skills required at university. The subject introduces students to analytical and critical thinking, supervised and independent academic research, and appropriate oral and written presentation of research results.

Academic Literacy is designed to ensure students' academic success in their first year at university by helping them become independent learners. A key element is willingness on the part of students to take responsibility for their own learning and to strive consistently to improve their own work.

In session one, students will be introduced to the expectations of tertiary study and essential skills and strategies. These will be built on in session two with the expectation that students will have developed greater independence in academic study skills.

## Subject structure

Academic Literacy is an 8 credit point, two-session subject delivered as 4 hours of scheduled classes per week. Session 1 has a credit point value of 3, while Session 2 is valued at 5 credit points. Classes consist of workshops, discussions, presentations and assessment tasks. Each session is of 14 week's duration with face-to-face classes scheduled for the first 12 weeks and a study/examination period in Weeks 13 and 14.

New and continuing students are deliberately placed together in tutorials to allow both new and second-session students to benefit from interaction with their peers. Second-session students are expected to take the initiative in mentoring new students, a process which allows them to build on and refine their communication and other academic skills, while new students are expected to seek and accept assistance from their more experienced peers.

In addition to scheduled class sessions, students are expected to spend additional time in individual study and research. As a general guideline students will need to spend at least 1 hour in private study (including completing homework and revision) for every hour of scheduled class time.

Teachers will be available for a consultation time each week. Students will be notified of the time and location of the consultation session during Week 1 of the Session. It is recommended that students experiencing difficulty with this subject arrange to consult with the teacher as difficulties are encountered.

Some students may require tutorial support to improve language/literacy skills. Where this is recommended, students will be advised to use the College's self-access facilities in the Multimedia Centre in their own time. These facilities are located upstairs in building 30. Where this is recommended, your attendance at and use of these facilities may form part of your participation mark.

## Learning resources

There is no set text for this subject. However, students are strongly advised to purchase the latest edition of a concise dictionary such as the *Macquarie Concise Dictionary*, the *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*, or the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, as well as a thesaurus, preferably the *Oxford Compact Thesaurus* or Roget's.

Student learning may be supported by a selection of online and hard copy readings where appropriate and other teaching/learning resources provided by the class teacher.

Students are also expected to use the online resources of the Wollongong University Library and resources at their relevant university/campus library. They will also be expected to keep up to date with news and current affairs by regularly reading reputable newspapers and journals and watching news and current affairs programs.

## Subject outcomes

Successful completion of Academic Literacy will enable students to:

- Apply effective reading strategies to a range of texts.
- Analyse questions & understand directional terms.
- Evaluate sources of information.
- Develop confidence and competence in using the resources of an academic library.
- Understand & construct an academic argument.
- Participate effectively in academic discussion.
- Proactively seek assistance in research consultations with the tutor outside scheduled class times.
- Present research results in well-structured formal presentations & academic papers.
- Write fully referenced, researched presentations & essays.
- Supply a critical assessment of the reliability of sources.
- Understand & avoid plagiarism & other inappropriate use of sources.
- Accurately and appropriately acknowledge sources in oral and written work.
- Take a leading role in peer mentoring.
- Reflect upon & edit their own work.
- Reflect upon their learning & evaluate their own needs & achievements.

## **Subject outline in weeks**

The following guide to lessons and activities may be adjusted to suit the needs of the group as long as subject outcomes and assessment criteria are met.

### **Week 1 – Introduction to academic study**

Review of subject requirements and assessment components

Strategies for successful learning

Acknowledging sources & avoiding plagiarism

Discussion of research questions

### **Week 2 - Beginning the research process**

Analysing questions & understanding directional terms

Library skills class

Needs analysis: writing

### **Week 3 – Finding & evaluating sources**

Evaluating sources

Writing annotations

Research assistance & consultation

### **Week 4 – Writing explanations**

Discussion essays / Argument essays / Reports

Understanding and constructing academic argument

### **Week 5 – Structure in academic writing**

Introductions / definitions

Paragraphs / conclusions

Research assistance & consultation

### **Week 6 –Presentation skills / reflection on learning**

In-class Assessment

Presentation skills

Reflective Learning exercise

### **Week 7- Presentation skills practice**

Referencing Assessment Task

Presentation practice

## **Week 8 - Assessment - Presentations**

Presentations and class discussions

## **Week 9- Assessment - Presentations**

Presentations and class discussions

## **Week 10 - Assessment - Presentations**

Presentations and class discussions

## **Week 11 - Reflection on learning**

Final research assistance and consultation

## **Week 12 - Editing one's work**

Academic writing features

Editing draft essays

## **Weeks 13 & 14 - Examination & study period**

Please note that there is no final examination for Academic Literacy in this study period.

# Assessment

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## Assessment and plagiarism policy

All written assessment tasks, with the exception of examinations and in-class tasks, must be word-processed unless students are otherwise advised.

Students must keep copies of all assessment tasks submitted for marking with the exception of class tests and examinations.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating or stealing that happens when a student uses someone else's work and presents it as his/her own without showing where it comes from. To avoid this, students are expected to submit their own original work for assessment and to accurately acknowledge all references and sources used in essays and assignments.

For information regarding assessment, plagiarism, acknowledging sources and examination rules, please refer to the Wollongong College Australia Student Handbook <http://www.wca.uow.edu.au/handbook>

## Assessment schedule

Task	Due	Weighting	Length/Time
In-class Assessment	Week 6	30%	500 words / 1.5 hours
Referencing Assessment Task	Week 7	10%	1 hour
Presentation	Weeks 8, 9 & 10	20%	10 -15 mins + discussion
Essay [Session 1-1,000 words; Session 2 - 1,300 words]	Week 12	30%	Weeks 2 -12
Participation	Ongoing	10%	Weeks 1 -12

**Session 1 results are weighted at 37.5% and session 2 results at 62.5%**

## Marking Guidelines

WCA best practice is that students can normally expect to have assessment tasks handed back within two weeks, and before the next assessment task is due. On occasion there may be exceptions to this time frame due to, for example, the size of the task, the size of the class, teacher illness or teacher leave.

Where there are several teachers marking a major assessment task, tasks will be handed back by all the teachers within the same week.

## Assessment criteria and explanation of components

All assessment components are marked according to set marking criteria. Some assessment tasks may undergo check-marking by a panel of tutors.

### **In-class Assessment** **30%**

The In-class Assessment will involve planning and writing an argument essay of at least 500 words. Students will be given an essay question and related stimulus material. The essay will be assessed on analysis of the question, planning of the essay, structure, argument and refutation of counterargument, and use of English.

Specific marking criteria will be explained in tutorials.

### **Referencing Assessment Task** **10%**

The Referencing Assessment Task will assess the student's ability to correctly acknowledge sources and compile an appropriate bibliography.

### **Presentation** **20%**

The presentation is the first of two assignments related to the research topic selected by students in Week 2. As this is an academic researched paper, the sources used to prepare this assessment should also be acknowledged appropriately during the presentation.

The presentation will be assessed on structure, interpretation of the research question, analysis of issues arising from the question, definition of key terms, development of claims and refutation of counterargument, range of research effort, acknowledgement of sources throughout the presentation, communication skills, and the ability to initiate an academic discussion and answer questions during the discussion time that follows the 10-15 minute researched presentation.

Students must submit a Presentation Summary and annotated bibliography no later than 24 hours before the scheduled presentation.

Specific marking criteria can be found on the Presentation Summary coversheet & will be explained in tutorials.

## Essay

30%

The essay is the culmination of the student's research effort. The essay should be written after the presentation and take into account the tutor's comments on the presentation.

The essay will be assessed on structure, interpretation of the research question, analysis of issues arising from the question, definition of key terms, development of argument and refutation of counterargument, range of research, acknowledgment and evaluation of sources, and use of English.

Specific marking criteria can be found on the essay cover sheet and will be explained in tutorials.

To allow markers to check for plagiarism, students will be required to submit **both** electronic & hard copy versions of the essay by the due date. The mark for this assessment will be unable to be finalised until both electronic & hard copy versions have been submitted.

## Participation

10%

Active participation in tutorials is expected of all students in all classes in the Foundation Studies Program. Participation in class discussions will help develop the student's confidence in questioning and commenting on material presented, encourage critical thinking and allow the tutor to evaluate the student's progress.

Participation marks may be allocated according to the following criteria:

- Constructive contribution to general class discussion
- Constructive feedback and contribution to discussions following presentations
- Active participation in tutorial support classes where recommended
- Proactive consultation with class teacher and/or tutorial support where relevant
- Completion of non-assessable tasks including homework, and drafts
- Preparation for class and research consultation sessions
- Active participation in group work
- Second session students: active mentoring of new students, ie, assisting with questioning, explanation, appropriate vocabulary, and being role models in group activities
- New students: active enlistment of peer assistance